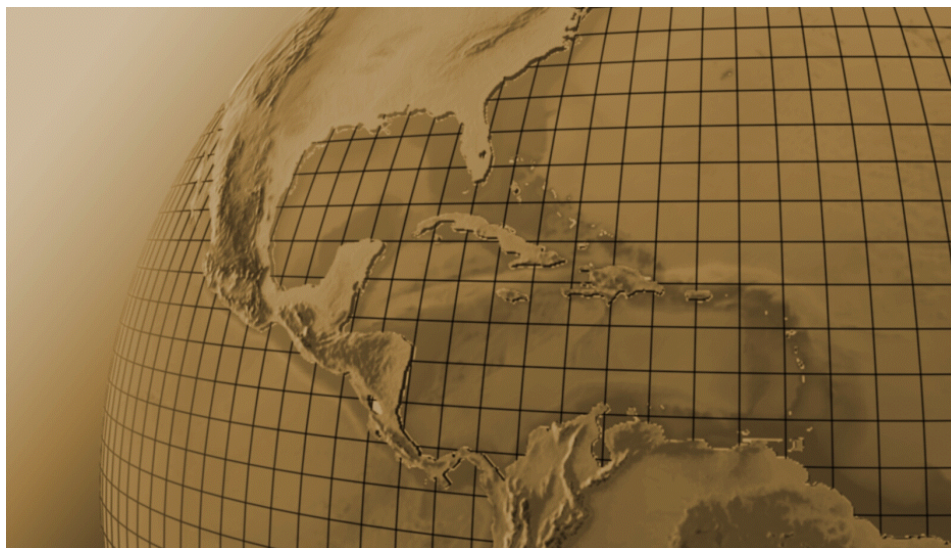




## Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN)

The NBII actively supports IABIN because we believe that a key to preserving this hemisphere's incredibly rich biodiversity is an understanding of the factors affecting biodiversity within a regional context.



The Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network is an Internet-based forum for technical and scientific cooperation that seeks to promote greater coordination among Western Hemisphere countries in the collection, sharing, and use of biodiversity information relevant to decision-making and education. IABIN is an initiative of the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development and was mandated as Initiative 31 of the Action Plan resulting from the December 1996 Summit in Bolivia. The Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development (CIDS) of the Organization of American States endorsed IABIN in a resolution passed in October 1999. Twenty-eight countries in the Americas have designated official IABIN Focal Points to coordinate national efforts to implement the network. The NBII is the U.S. Focal Point for IABIN. The IABIN Council comprises the official

national Focal Points as well as representatives from interested inter-governmental organizations and initiatives. The Executive Committee guides the operations of IABIN and executes the policy decisions of the Council.

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Species do not recognize political boundaries. Therefore, issues such as invasive species, migratory birds, amphibian decline, and the spread of diseases can be addressed effectively only if we share information across borders. Through international information exchange, we can multiply the value of our activities and research, learning from each other what has failed and what has worked.

### IABIN Projects

IABIN has received funding for its projects from the Organization of American States, the World Bank, the U.S. State Department, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (US AID), as well as from the governments of many of the participating countries. Activities that demonstrate the value of transnational exchange of biodiversity information within the Americas include: a pilot project on invasive species in the Americas, a survey of New World



holdings in European collections, a project on harmonizing metadata initiatives throughout IABIN, and training in “Species Analyst,” a software package that supports analysis and decision-making.

## 2002 Activities

In 2002, IABIN is focusing on three activities. As part of an invasive species project funded by the U.S. State Department, NBII is managing the creation of a distributed network of interoperable nodes using common standards that will provide Web-accessible information on invasive species in the Americas. Eleven IABIN countries each receive support to inventory their invasive species information.

Implementation of IABIN as an integrated network has been hampered by the lack of a recurring financial base. To further IABIN development, US AID has funded a study, recently completed, to examine various options

for funding IABIN development and recommend a strategy to ensure the network’s financial sustainability. A Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant is funding a consultative process to allow IABIN to develop a strategic plan for network development and a large-scale (around \$4 million) proposal to GEF to initiate implementation of that plan.

## Partnerships Are Key

IABIN works closely with other regional and global biodiversity information networking initiatives, including the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the North American Biodiversity Information Network, and the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity. These collaborations, as well as our partnerships with agencies at all levels of government, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, academia, and private sector enterprises, ensure that these various

efforts are complementary and that scarce resources are leveraged to provide a greater return on investment.

IABIN will continue to advance toward its objective through establishing cooperative linkages with other regional and global initiatives such as GBIF; investigating appropriate standards and protocols and recommending selected standards for network adoption; evaluating software tools for possible network-wide use; and seeking support for projects that build capacity within participating countries and institutions while accomplishing the goals of information exchange throughout the Americas.

## For More Information

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